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# Yugiri O Kyaku San (The Guest who leaves with the Twilight) : The Fenollosas and Lafcadio Hearn

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“Yugiri O Kyaku San  
(The Guest who leaves with the Twilight)” :  
The Fenollosas and Lafcadio Hearn

Akiko Murakata

Ernest F. Fenollosa (1853-1908), the art historian who had taught at the University of Tokyo and contributed to the founding of the National Museums and the Tokyo University of Art, 1878-90, was back in Japan, 1896-1901, with his second wife Mary, a Southern writer and poetess. The Fenollosas became good friends of Hearn during their sojourn in Tokyo, exchanging visits, letters, and books. The record of their brief but memorable friendship is to be found in Mrs. Fenollosa's manuscript journals kept at the City Museum, Mobile, Alabama<sup>1</sup> and her typescript reminiscence now in the Hearn Library, Faculty of Letters, University of Tokyo, which has been misattributed by some to Brenda Fenollosa, the daughter of Ernest and his first wife Lizzie.<sup>2</sup>

Hearn first met Fenollosa during the three months following his arrival in Yokohama, that is, between 4 April, when he landed, and 6 July, 1890, when Fenollosa left Japan after twelve years' service in the Government to become the curator of the newly founded Japanese Department at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. (They celebrated the centennial of their Department of Japanese Art in Boston this fall, by the way.)

According to Brenda writing in 1952,

One day at an informal lunch-party [she was then seven years old] [...] I was allowed to be at the table, and sat between Mr. Percival Lowell and Mr.

Lafcadio Hearne [sic]. [...] I was charmed with Mr. Lowell [...]. But Mr. Lafcadio Hearne was repulsive to look at: he had a wonderful voice, to be sure: and he talked well; but he was totally blind, and his food landed in strange places,—much to my delight.<sup>3</sup>

There is Hearn's letter to Fenollosa, addressed to Kaga Yashiki, the latter's official residence, dated 27 May, 1890, reporting of his sight-seeing in Kamakura, Enoshima, and Fujisawa:

Dear Professor Fenollosa:

I have been to Enoshima, and the Dragon-goddess made her shrine inaccessible with rain,—so that my second visit was only profitable in so far as it rendered me acquainted with the mazy interior of the most wonderful Japanese hotel I have yet seen.

But the time spent at Kamakura was enchantment. I have made the acquaintance of the Gods of the Underworld, and looked—not without some little sense of fear,—into the face of Emma;—and I have seen a miraculous Kannon,—I think about 70 feet high,—and Oni, and Ni=O, without number. I have also seen several wonderful kakemonos of the Saino=Kawara, the Judgment Seat, the Mirror in which Souls are seen,—all the worlds of Shadow. How marvellously does this world resemble antique Greece,—not merely in its legends and the non joyous phases of its faith, but in all its graces of arts and its senses of beauty, and its witchcraft to transform cheapness itself into luxury incomparable! I have been in poor houses, when—as in Pompeii,—the commonest article was an object of art.

And I have learned how—to use chop=sticks!

I am going to live at Mr. Hinton's, and write to let you know. He has just written me the kindest possible letter of encouragement.

—At Fuji-sawa I got the idea for a Japanese ghost=story, which I hope much from. The supernatural seems to have its birthplace and original birthrights here.

—I wonder whether the Elder Egypt had equal power to enchant strangers? The intense delight of all this to me—the delicious ghostliness of it,—is the sense of being in a world of mysteries and Gods all ALIVE,—closer to you than neighbors,—real, comprehensible, beautiful beyond description. After having lived ten or twelve years with archaeology, the effect on me is so queer that I sometimes think I am certainly dreaming it all.

Lafcadio Hearn<sup>4</sup>

Fenollosa showed Hearn prints by Hokusai and Hiroshige which "awakened his sympathy and delight", according to Fenollosa's anonymous review of *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* and *Out of the East* in the *Atlantic*

*Monthly* (June, 1895)<sup>5</sup> which I have just uncovered. In this review of Hearn's unique "anthologies of lyrics", Fenollosa contrasted B. H. Chamberlain's "cynical, unfeeling" comments in *Things Japanese* (1890) to Hearn's "sympathy and exquisiteness of touch" which succeeded in illuminating the true soul of Japan.<sup>6</sup>

The following is a contemporary account by Mary McNeil Fenollosa (1865-1953) of her and her husband's friendship with Hearn, culled from the journals owned by her granddaughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Winslow, in Montrose, Alabama. Raised in Mobile, in the proud poverty of a Southern family whose fortunes were damaged by the Civil War, Mary McNeil inherited the beauty and untamed spirit of her mother. At eighteen she eloped with a boy not much older, and at twenty was a widow with an infant son. In 1890 she came to Japan with her son to marry Ledyard Scott, her earlier lover, then teaching at Zoshikan, Kagoshima. When she returned to Mobile for the birth of her second child, a daughter, her second marriage was ended, but not the lure of the Orient. Under the influence of her parents who were both writing for publication, she had set out on a literary career, writing for newspapers in Mobile and New Orleans. In 1894 she became the assistant to the Curator of Japanese Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The following year Fenollosa divorced Lizzy to marry Mary, subsequently resigning from his post.<sup>7</sup>

Ernest and Mary Fenollosa came back to Japan via Europe in the summer of 1896. During the four months in Japan, three of which they spent in Kyoto, Fenollosa tried to contact Hearn in Kobe [12 August at the *Chronicle*] and in Tokyo [3 November], but failed.<sup>8</sup> Hearn had been married to Setsu, a daughter of the samurai, in Matsue, and adopting her family name Koidzumi, was naturalized as Japanese in 1885. Hearn moved to Tokyo with his family when Prof. Masakazu Toyama, Dean of the College of Literature, the Imperial University, invited him to teach English literature there from the following September.

The Fenollosas returned to Tokyo in April, 1897, but their reunion

was postponed till a year later. Ernest and Mary wrote poems and articles and collaborated on a novel, while hunting for a position. Kano Jigoro, Fenollosa's student at the University of Tokyo, now the head of the Higher Normal School, offered a teaching position in English. Kano had hired Hearn at the Fifth High School at Kumamoto when he was the principal there. Fenollosa started to teach the graduating class in January, 1898.<sup>9</sup>

Through the mediation of Prof. Toyama, it was arranged that Hearn was to come to Fenollosa's house at Fujimi-cho on 1 April, 1898. Mary Fenollosa's journal entry for the date is filled with description of "the event of this day... a visit, an actual visit from Lafcadio Hearn".

Ernest had set this evening as a convenient time, in reply to Hearn's characteristic letter [...].

He got here about 2.30. Ann [Dyer; Mary's friend and another Southern writer] and I, of course, kept well out of the way. We heard Ernest greet him cordially, then take him into the *kyakuma*. About an hour later E. came rushing upstairs his face radiant and cried. "Oh he is splendid. [...] He will see you—he *wants* to see you. It is a delight to see such a man!

Of course I hurried down. I had put on my Japanese kimono—tea gown, thinking it would be a subtle compliment. As this was my first sight of him, I will try to describe the effect.

A small man of a gray tone, with delicate slightly distorted features and with his entire personality warped, twisted a little to the right—the result, I suppose, of his semi-blindness and poor eyesight.

He was thinner and smaller than I had thought, and his hair is very grey. The white blind left eyeball is a terrible defect and one feels always his consciousness of this. He sat in a rocking chair facing me, and his left hand constantly found its way up to that side of his face, shading it and partially concealing the poor eye. His right eye is large and dark, but too full and prominent—his nose extremely sensitive, delicate—and aquiline, his lips are thin and precise, parting and closing with an air of precision over rather crowded small teeth. His mouth twists to the right as he talks. In fact as I said, he seems warped to that side.

But his beautiful voice—sweet and vibrating—never loud nor piercing—has an irresistible charm—and as one knows him better, and begins to feel that the shy spirit is creeping more and more from its fragile shell, one ceases to care for anything material. As Ann said, "He carries his own environment with him".

Many things he said were most beautiful and interesting. He spoke of the sympathy between Herbert Spencer and Buddhism. We don't agree to

this, but didn't contradict it.

I spoke of his essay "Dust" —how I loved it and how to me, it seemed to have the quality of *chirimen* which pleased him.

He told me of his last summer's ascent of Fuji. How as one approaches the summit—instead of rising, he seems to be sinking down into the concavity of a great earth ball.

*It is the horizon that rises, not you.*

The steepness of the cone is more noticeable on the mountain itself than at a distance, but the disillusion of that charred lava mass under foot is painful.

At night one looks down on a sea of milk with a little black thing sticking up out of it which is Fuji.

As he stayed on, he became more confidential, charming and close. He told us of the book in progress, a book of "Why's" which he calls "Retrospectives" —a series of the essays trying to explain by science and karma the subtle memories that attack us. He told us of conversations with Dr. von Koeber and a French priest at the University that once in speaking of the mysterious power of perfume he had quoted Schopenhauer as saying that "perfume is the blood of memory".

He grew so genial that we ventured to bring Ann in too. He stayed four hours. It was a wonderful afternoon. We talked of nothing else until bed time.

He has promised to send us a copy of *Buddha Fields*. I hope he will do it.

*Gleanings in Buddha Fields* arrived two days later by express messenger with an inscription for Mary. "Our dark day was turned to light. We read this or rather E. read it to us all day."

Some parts of it are internally subtle—almost to the point of startling one's soul—in other parts his Old Man of the Sea, Herbert Spencer, drags him down and holds him back.

The purely Buddhist chapter "Nirvana" shows great lack in Buddhist perception, but both chapters on folk song are marvellously sweet and fine. Of all there is nothing to touch the first "A Living God". He thinks this Shinto, but it is more purely Buddhist than anything he has ever written on Buddhism.

Altogether it is a wonderful book, and in combination with the way I received it, is one of my greatest treasures.

Mary wrote him a letter of thanks that night and early next morning, went to the uekiya at Kudan, hoping to find a Hakuren [white lotus] to send

along with it. She bought a pure white jinchoge (daphne) in its place, had it put in a pale green Chinese bowl, hung her note among its branches, and sent it by a special messenger, who brought back Hearn's reply "so charming I hardly dare to believe in it yet".

This is the first of three Hearn letters addressed to her in Elizabeth Bisland's *Life and Letters*, II (1906), while two, addressed to Fenollosa, are not so personal and more formal.

April, 1898<sup>10</sup>

Dear Mrs. Fenollosa,—To say that you have sent me the most beautiful letter that I ever received—certainly the one that most touched me—is not to say anything at all! Of course I hope to see more of the soul that could utter such a letter—every word a blossom fragrant like the lovely flower to which the letter was tied.

On 22 April Ernest Fenollosa visited Hearn. According to Mary's journal,

[E.] saw his wife, and a beautiful boy of five. Said child affected him strangely. He almost thought of the Ajari's soul. Hearn had spoken of me—of my spontaneity. [...] Said he had seen some of my writings under the name Mary M. Scott (alas!) and hoped that Mary Fenollosa was the same person.

E. asked him if his wife knew how famous her husband was. H. answered that she had heard so, that he told her all his best inspiration was derived from her, but she didn't believe it. [...] H. said that he wanted his wife to know me, but that she never met a foreign lady and was shy. I believe it will come about if we are not in too great a hurry to rush matters. H. begged E. to stay to a Japanese dinner, but he didn't. I almost wished he did. Took E. out to the old cemetery back of his house and they wandered there and talked. He told E. about all his methods of work, his publishers, friends, and everything else. Spoke of the Kioto University. Was altogether cordial, charming.

Hearn dropped in on 9 May and the Fenollosas, Ann, Ralph Cram [the architect; author of *Impressions of Japanese Architecture and the Allied Arts* (1905)], and Arthur Knapp, Jr. [son of the Unitarian missionary], all sitting together in the drawing-room, "enjoyed an enchanted hour in Hearn's presence". Ernest and Mary read the copy of Stevenson's *The Weir of*

*Hermiston* which Hearn had loaned them.

The Fenollosas went to Hearn's house on 15 May to return the book with Mary's letter of thanks and James Allen's books to loan, but as Ernest went in and sent in his name, "there was quite a scuffling around upstairs".

The messenger returned to say that Mr. H. was in Yokohama. It all seems improbable. [...] We cannot imagine what has happened, but fear that some rumour has reached and affected him, though this itself seems improbable. But E. refused to conjecture, and he was right.

The following day came "a note from Hearn, making all right".

Hearn wailed that "I am over head and ears in work — with the dreadful prospect of examinations and the agonies of proofreading to be rolled upon me at the same moment".<sup>11</sup> But, even if he had been free, he did not think he should have cared to go back to the Ukiyo-e exhibition Fenollosa organized at Ueno Shinsaka (15 April-15 May). Hearn appreciated Fenollosa's catalogues,<sup>12</sup> but missed the folk-lore and legends—stories—, William Anderson had utilized<sup>13</sup>.

[...] nothing excited in me any desire to possess it, even as a gift, except the Kappa [by Utamaro, No. 174] and Shoki [by Sekien, Utamaro, and Shuncho, No. 173]. [...] Verily I prefer the modern color-prints, which I can afford sometimes to buy. What is more, I do not wish to learn better. While I know nothing I can always follow the Shinto code and consult my heart about buying things.<sup>14</sup>

Hearn was working on a Buddhist legend told him by Mary during his earlier visit:

As for the Mountain of Skulls—yes: I have written it—About seven or eight times over; but it still refuses to give the impression I feel, and can't define—the impression that floated into my brain with the soft-flowing voice of the teller.<sup>15</sup>

There was another "charming visit from Mr. Hearn" on 20 May.

He came early about 3. pm. Brought back *Kentucky Cardinal* and *Aftermath* and didn't like either. [...] We introduced him to Francis Thompson. He read "The Daisy" out loud and was perfectly charmed with it. Then,



greatest of all, he read his interpretation of the story of the skull. It was wonderful and I think he liked our sincere admiration.

He brought me a little white volume called *Prose Idylls* by John Albee and thinks much of him.

On 23 May a copy of *The Atlantic* with a note came from Hearn and the following day she sent a note of thanks to him.

On 9 June a letter came from Hearn commending Ernest's *Century* article ["An Outline of Japanese Art", Pt. I (May); Pt. II (June, 1898)] and saying that he might "happen in" the next afternoon. Hearn suggested the possibility of a new English teacher's being needed at the Dai Gakko and advised Fenollosa to see about it at once.

Fenollosa went to see Dean Toyama and Professor Tetsujiro Inouye at 8.00 the next morning, Mary reports in her journal:

Dear Mr. Hearn came a little after 3.00. Ernest had a nice long talk with him. Hearn seems disgruntled with Japanese affairs. Says that it is certainly doomed and politics is ruined. Also the students are conceited, self-opinionated and superficial. I was sorry to see him so near dejection. His work is his great comfort and solace.

The Fenollosas moved to a new house near the Imperial University on 13 August. According to Mary's reminiscence,

We never saw him during the summer months. Within a very few days after the closing of the Imperial University for its vacation, a certain modest Japanese Professor of Literature, Koizdumi Yakumo by name, gathered his family about him, collected the few goods and chattles considered necessary by the small brown wren of a Japanese wife, and quietly disappeared from hot and dusty Tokyo. During such holidays he never wrote to us. So far as I could learn, summers were his harvest times for creative work.<sup>16</sup>

Mary met Hearn on 6 October. Ernest saw him the following day and "the fairy story he promised" her ["A Boy Who Drew Cats"?] came that night. On 14 October, Mary met Hearn at the University Red Gate and talked of Buddhism—experiences of Tendai at Nikko, where the Fenollosas spent the summer. "He promised to come to see us, if we wouldn't introduce him to any sayojins."

Proof sheets of Hearn's essay "The Eternal Haunter", "one of the most exquisite things that ever was written," came on 8 November. Mary was "surprised and delighted that he should have sent it". Two days later, she "got a most exquisite letter from Mr. Hearn in answer to my little stutter of praise about his 'Eternal Haunter'. It shall be among the treasures of my days".

Dear Mrs. Fenollosa.—I see that my little word "sympathy" —used, of course, in the fine French sense of fellow-feeling in matters *not* of the common—was as true as I could wish it. . . .

I am the one now to give thanks—and very earnest thanks; for I confess that I felt a little nervous about your opinion. Independently of the personal quality which makes it so precious for me, I believe that it must represent, in a general way, the opinion of a number of cultured ladies whom I never have seen, and never shall see, but who are much more important as critics than any editors—for they make opinion, not in newspapers or magazines, but in social circles. [...] I picked out the little piece sent you, because it had a Japanese subject as a hanging-peg—so that I thought you and the professor would feel more inclined to take the trouble of reading it.<sup>17</sup>

Mary sent a note to Hearn on 7 December "to keep him in mind that he had promised to come to see us during the holidays," enclosing two of her old verses from *The Lotos*. Just after lunch on 26 December, the Fenollosas had "a delightful surprise":

Mr. Hearn came to thank me, he said, for the little gift to his child. He stayed for four hours and we had a most delightful afternoon. Has promised to bring his little boy to see me Friday [30 December]. He brought me a book of verses by Constance Naden.

On 29 December, two notes came from Hearn, "explaining why he isn't coming to bring his little boy after all. I am not surprised. He is a strange creature."

Hearn wrote to Fenollosa,

I have been meditating, and after the meditation I came to the conclusion not to visit your charming new home again—not at least before the year 1900. I suppose that I am a beast and an ape; but I nevertheless hope to make you understand. [...] My friends are much more dangerous than my enemies.

These latter [...] help me to maintain the isolation indispensable to quiet regularity of work, and the solitude which is absolutely essential to thinking upon such subjects as I am now engaged on. [...]

But my friends!—ah! my friends! They speak so beautifully of my work; they *believe* in it; they say they want more of it—and yet they would destroy it! They do not know what it costs—and they would break the wings and scatter the feather-dust, even as the child that only wanted to caress the butterfly. [...]

Now if I were to go down to your delightful little house, with my boy [...] and see him kindly treated—and chat with you about eternal things—and yield to the charm of old days (when I must confess that you fascinated me not a little)—there is no saying what the consequences to me might eventually become. Alas! I can afford friends only on paper—I can occasionally write—I can get letters that give me joy; but visiting is out of the possible. I must not even *think* about other people's kind words and kind faces, but work—work—work—while the Scythe is sharpening within vision. [...]

Enjoyment is not for me—excepting in the completion of work. But I have not been the loser by my visits to you both—did I not get that wonderful story? And so I have given you more time than any other person or persons in Tokyo. But now—through the seasons—I must again disappear. [...]<sup>18</sup>

The Fenollosas moved to Kobinata, Koishikawa in March, 1899. On 9 April, "Mr. Hearn's new *Exotics and Retrospectives* came". Hearn wrote to Mary in May:

You will be shocked, I fear, when I tell you that I was careless enough to lose the address given me in your last charming letter. Your letters are too precious to be thus mislaid; and I am ashamed of negligence in this case. But though I forgot the address, I forgot no word of the letter—nor of the previous charming letter, with its quotation from that very clever friend of yours (Miss Very)—the Emersonian quotation from the Brahma-poem. [...] We are face to face here with the spectacle of a powerful and selfish civilization demoralizing and crushing a weaker and, in many ways, a nobler one (if we are to judge by comparative ideals); and the spectacle is not pretty.<sup>19</sup>

On 1 June, "Mr. Hearn sent me the proof of his "skull" story ["Fragment", the first story in *In Ghostly Japan*]".

On 14 November, "Hearn came in the afternoon: a surprise and delight". Six days later, Mary received an advance copy of her book [*Out of the Nest: a Flight of Verses*] from Little, Brown in Boston. The copy of

her maiden anthology, half of which are poems with Japanese motifs, in the Hearn Library now at Toyama University, has the following inscription: "To my dear friend, Lafcadio Hearn, is sent this first presentation copy of my first book. O agari Nasai! Mary McNeil Fenollosa. Tokio, Nov. 1899"<sup>20</sup>

"Mr. Hearn's new book," *In Ghostly Japan*, arrived on 9 December. The entry in Mary's journal, 11 March, 1900 has her last mention of the author: "Ernest went to poor Mr. Toyama's funeral. Saw Hearn there". Hearn's farewell letter to Mary written just before the Fenollosas left for the U. S. in August, 1900, is preserved at City Museum, Mobile, Alabama.

I will not bother you with an account of my hopeless attempt to find your house about a month ago and of the people encountered in the street that caused me to flee from Koishikawa. That will serve to make you laugh when you return from the faraway South.

I hear that very nice things have been said about your "little birds". Other little birds will chirp in your ear on the long journey; [...]

It is not goodbye, but only "au revoir!"—is it not?

Even though the Fenollosas came back for their last sojourn in Tokyo, 14 May-21 September, 1900, there is no record of any meeting with Hearn. The news of Hearn's death on 26 September, 1904 reached the Fenollosas three days later at their new home, in Spring Hill, Alabama, named "Kobinata" after their last Tokyo address. Fenollosa wrote a letter of condolence to Hearn's widow on 30 September:

[...] Mr. Koidzumi far more than realized, in his wonderful writings, that revelation of Japan to the Western World of which, by his exceptional sympathies and talents, I believed him capable.

And now that he has passed to the spirit world of which he thought so often and wrote so much, it seems to us who are left behind as if the brightest star in the sky had gone out. It is a satisfaction to me to remember that I spent a portion of day with him, you, and your children, in your own home. It gives me this privilege to address you, and to tell you that you have, in me and my wife (who was also his friend), two warm friends in America who are mourning with you, and are wishing to give you some more tangible proof of their warm regards.<sup>21</sup>

Fenollosa followed Hearn four years later.

Now, Mary's reminiscence, "Yugiri O Kyaku San (The Guest who comes with the Twilight)", is a confirmation of and supplement to the contemporary accounts given above. It is true that there are some lapses of memory and retrospective romanticization, but on the whole it seems reliable.

As for the eulogy of "Yugiri Okyaku-san", it seems, Hearn usually arrived in early afternoon, leaving with the twilight. To be more exact, he should better be called "the Guest who *leaves* with the Twilight".

Mary remembers, Hearn "told me more than once how he loved our living room, and that he thought of it often when he was away."<sup>22</sup> One great reason, she conjectures, was because of "the beautiful house-plants that we kept in it, particularly a great variety of the exquisite, fragrant 'ume' shrub. [...] January is the best time for ume blossoms, and it is certain that Mr. Hearn came oftenest during that month." However, so far as her journal entries are concerned—and Mary did not miss the slightest reference to Hearn—, there is no record of his visit in January. Moreover, the little uyeki plant used to hang her note of thanks from has become ume instead of jinchoge!

The genesis of Hearn's "Fragment" in *In Ghostly Japan* (1899) is mentioned as follows:

The Buddhist story which I had for him on this particular visit, and which made his fine face glow with swift appreciation, was of a young monk who, immediately after the change called death, found himself in the Buddhist purgatory with his task of expiation, the climbing to the summit of a towering mountain of human skulls. [...] <sup>23</sup>

Judging from Mary's journal and Hearn's letter, it must have been during his first visit on 1 April, 1898, unless there was another, unrecorded visit in April.

When did Mary Fenollosa write this memoir of their " 'Twilight' friend" ? It has some clues to dating: her reference to Somerset Maugham's

*Of Human Bondage* (1915) and her referring to Hearn's eldest son, "the boy Kazuo, now a young man."

She compares Philip Carey, the hero of Maugham's thinly disguised autobiographical novel, to Hearn: "I do not think that the book appeared before Mr. Hearn's death. If it did, I sincerely hope that he never read it, for, with the substitution of his poor left eye for the misshapen foot, it's leading character might have been himself."<sup>24</sup> This places her memoir as written after its publication.

She quotes Hearn's fatherly descriptions of "his idol" and confessions of almost reverent concern for "the little lamp", from Bisland's *Life and Letters*, wondering "whether, in the entire range of this world's literature, there is another genius who ever wrote of his child with such heart-breaking tenderness. [...] Some day I would like to write another essay and call it, 'The Humanity of Lafcadio Hearn.'"<sup>25</sup>

Nina H. Kennard's biography, *Lafcadio Hearn* (1912) has a photograph of Kazuo, taken probably during her visit in Japan a year earlier, presumably at the age of eighteen. Mary Fenollosa's reference, "I do not know where the boy Kazuo, now a young man, lives, or whether he lives at all," suggests her ignorance of this first full biography after Bisland's, the only book she quotes from.

Recalling Hearn in Japan, Mary Fenollosa should have referred to Yone Noguchi, *Lafcadio Hearn in Japan* (Yokohama: Kelly and Walsh, 1910), which included Mrs. Hearn's reminiscences. Another translation of the same reminiscences was published by Houghton Mifflin in 1918. Her quoting the widow's letter from Bisland at the end of her memoir probably shows that Mary Fenollosa had not read Mrs. Hearn's reminiscences.

Whether Paul Kiyoshi Harada and Frederick Johnson's translation of Mrs. Hearn's reminiscences enjoyed more publicity and wider circulation than Noguchi's book published in Japan is not certain; Noguchi was internationally known as poet and author.

Judging from her reference to Maugham's novel, her assumption of

Kazuo Koidzumi's age, and her apparent ignorance of Mrs. Hearn's published reminiscences, may we date "Yugiri O Kyakusan" as written sometime possibly between 1915 and 1918? If it was, these were also the "Twilight" years of her own life. Our memories are the Guests who come with the Twilight.

Ernest and Mary Fenollosa's brief but intimate friendship with Lafcadio Hearn coincided with their most literary period, when they were both writing poems [Mary published her first anthology in 1899 with Ernest's collaboration] and working together on a novel, *Truth Dexter* (1901), which became a bestseller at home. Fenollosa was also studying and translating Japanese and Chinese poems and *No* plays. However, it was not only their common literary interest and intellectual concern but more particularly, the warm and sympathetic Southern hospitality and companionship of the hostess that drew the shy, ascetic recluse to the Fenollosas' drawing room and kept him there till well into the twilight.

### Notes

This essay is a revised and enlarged version of my paper read at the international session of the Yakumo Society in Matsue during the conference to commemorate the centennial of Lafcadio Hearn's arrival in Japan on 31 August, 1990. Hearn's letter to Fenollosa, 27 May, 1890 is published by the permission of the University of Virginia Library. I am grateful to Mrs. Elizabeth Winslow, granddaughter of Mary Fenollosa, and Mr. Caldwell Delaney, Director of City Museum, Mobile, who made the Japanese journals of Mary Fenollosa available to me with permission to publish. Quotation from Brenda Fenollosa's memoir is published by courtesy of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

- 1) Akiko Murakata ed. and trans. "Fenollosa Fujin no Nippon Nikki (The Japanese Journals of Mrs. Fenollosa)", *The Kyoto Shimibun* (3 November, 1981-24 June, 1982). The edition dealt with the summer of 1896, from their arrival in Nagasaki till departure from Yokohama, 6 July-6 November, 1896, focusing on their sojourn in Kyoto; Murakata, "Fenollosa Fusai to Lafcadio Hearn: Meari Fujin no Nikki o Chuushin ni (The Fenollosas and Lafcadio Hearn: Mainly from Mary Fenollosa's Journals)", *Fenollosa Shiryou* (The Ernest F. Fenollosa Papers at the Houghton Library, Harvard University), III (Tokyo: Museum Press, 1987), pp. 202-9; Murakata, "Fenollosa Fusai to Nô (The Fenollosas and Noh)", *Kanze*

(September, 1983), p. 2.

- 2) Kenji Zenimoto and Bon Koizumi eds. "Rafukadio Haan Nempu (Lafcadio Hearn : A Chronology)", *Rafukadio Haan Chosakushu*, 15 (Tokyo: Kobunsha, 1988). p. 634. Zenimoto ed. "Yugiri O Kyaku San (The Guest who comes with the Twilight)", *Herun*, 27 (1990), pp. 103-114.
- 3) [Account of Her Childhood in Japan], p. 8, Houghton Library, Harvard University.
- 4) Lafcadio Hearn Collection( #6101), Clifton Waller Barrett Library, Manuscripts Division, Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library.
- 5) "Recent Books on Japan", pp. 830-835. "[...] he is the true congener of the Ukiyoe painter, that artist from and for the masses, who fills his color prints with the prismatic life of his day. Of this transition era he is the Hokusai and Hiroshige, men whose work, shown him in Japan by Mr. Fenollosa, awakened his sympathy and delight" (p. 832). Fragments of the draft of Fenollosa's review are among the Fenollosa papers at the Houghton Library, Harvard University. Murakata ed. *Fenollosa Shiryo*, III, pp. 103-5; 104-6.
- 6) See Murakata, "Fenollosa to Haan no Shinshutsu Shohyo (The Newly Uncovered Reviews by Fenollosa and Hearn)", *Lotus* 11 (March, 1991), pp. 1-21.
- 7) Caldwell Delaney, "Mary McNeil Fenollosa, A Southern Woman of Letters", *A Mobile Sextet* (Mobile, Ala. : The Haunted Book Shop, 1981), pp. 96 and 99.
- 8) Mary Fenollosa's journal; Masanobu Otani, "Omoide Hitotsu (A Reminiscence)", *Bungei Kenkyu*, 1 (1928), pp. 17-19.
- 9) Murakata ed. "Fenollosa no 'Bungaku Shinsetsu' (Fenollosa's 'True Theory of Literature')", *Review of English Literature*, XLI (March, 1979), pp. 66-164.
- 10) Bisland misdated the year as 1899.
- 11) To Ernest Fenollosa, Bisland, II, p. 381.
- 12) The Hearn Library, Toyama University (former Toyama High School), has two catalogues by Fenollosa: *The Masters of Ukiyoe : A Complete Historical Description of Japanese Paintings and Color Prints of the Genre School. As Shown in Exhibition at the Fine Arts Building, New York, January, 1896* by W. H. Ketcham and *Catalogue of the Exhibition of Ukiyoe Paintings and Prints held at Ikaon Onsen, Uyeno Shinzaka*.



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- 13) Hearn referred either to *Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue of a Collection of Japanese and Chinese Paintings in the British Museum* (1886) or to *Japanese Wood Engravings* (1895).
- 14) Bisland, II, 382-3.
- 15) *Ibid.*, 383-4.
- 16) "Yugiri O Kyaku San", pp. 4-5.
- 17) Bisland, II, 401-2.
- 18) Bisland, II, 412-4.
- 19) Bisland, II, 440-2.
- 20) *Catalogue of the Lafcadio Hearn Library in the Toyama High School* (1927), p. 17.
- 21) Seiichi Yamaguchi, "*Fenorosa to Rafucadio Haan*", *Heron* (Saitama Univ.), (March, 1979), p. 68.
- 22) p. 3.
- 23) p. 4.
- 24) p. 1.
- 25) p. 9.

## APPENDIX I.

Ernest F. Fenollosa's Review of Lafcadio Hearn, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* (1894) and *Out of the East* (1895)

—from *The Atlantic Monthly* (June, 1895)

## RECENT BOOKS ON JAPAN.

The real Japan, to use a somewhat presumptuous title adopted by Mr. Henry Norman, is slowly coming to light. Facts about Japan have been abundantly set forth, but it is the purpose and privilege of art to transmute fact, and to reveal the more intimate and pregnant truth which merely clever reporters miss. The form of the art may be music, color, or fit language, and it is as works of literary art that the intelligent reader apprehends the recent writings of Mr. Lafcadio Hearn.<sup>1</sup> Through this art he comes into a very intimate acquaintance with the finer verities of Japanese life.

Mr. Hearn seems born to be the mouthpiece of races so alien to ourselves that they live the poetry they do not talk about. To those whose hearts had been swept by the storms of Chita, or had drifted through the opalescent lympha which bathe Martinique, the tidings that this lover of hues had made Japan his home was very welcome; for Japan, too long a prey to the literary Philistine, is indeed a poet's Mecca; in her alone are the life-tints of a pristine world undimmed. There is a library of books about Japan, but, as in the sketches of those English painters who have visited her, no local color, no aroma. Some are heavy with disjointed skeletons of facts, others involved in a maze of chronologic tunneling. Either description or elucidation employs an Occidental method; in many cases indiscriminate eulogy repels one who is willing to be enchanted. There must also be mentioned those counter-streams of calumny in which the writer would seem to seek notoriety by opposition. Only one of these

productions need be cited, that of Madame Chrysanthème, in which the brilliant French sensualist, lifting for a moment a little soiled and trampled blossom cries to the world, "Behold Japan's spotless flower!" and tosses it farther into the slough. Of the deep-hedged gardens and lily-starred hilltops he does not speak. Perhaps he cannot. Yet somewhere between the dissolute cynicisms of Pierre Loti and the amiable puerilities of Sir Edwin Arnold a blue haze trembles over the middle distance where lies the living reality of poetry, the soul of Japan.

Sympathy and exquisiteness of touch are the characteristics of Mr. Hearn's genius. He is a chameleon, glowing with the hue of outer objects or of inward moods, or altogether iridescent. He becomes translucent and veined like a moth on a twig, or mottled as if with the protective golden-browns of fallen leaves. We may not look for architectonic or even plastic powers. His is not the mind which constructs of inner necessity, which weaves plots and schemes, or thinks of its frame as it paints. He attempts no epic of history. The delver for sociologic or theologic spoil must seek deeper waters. One does not polish a diamond with a grindstone, or plant violets with a steamploUGH.

Though, as a poet, Mr. Hearn discards the tonic of rhythm, as an artist he lends keen ear to the chromatics of words. He blends his words as a limner his pigments. The crisp lines of dialogue or of exclamation gleam against the warm shadows of liquid narrative. In a yet more special sense he has the painter's eye. All nature, to him, is a kaleidoscope of pure color, and no writer of English has so richly charged his phrase with it. Such tints as these, wet from the tube, we can actually see him spread: "Dead rich purples cloud broadly behind and above the indigo blackness of the serrated hills, — mist purples, fading upward smokily into faint vermilions or dim gold, which again melt up through ghostliest greens into the blue." Or again, speaking of old stone foxes: "Their backs are clad with finest green velvet of old mosses; their limbs are spotted, and their tails are tipped with the dead gold or the dead silver of delicate fungi." It may seem

to some, but not to a painter, that such word-limning is at times overdone. In his West Indian sketches he has been called almost cloyingly rich and voluptuous, and there is doubtless much truth in the charge; but in his later books the all-potent influence of Japanese restraint seems to have refined and subdued his wonderful style to more perfect harmonies. Like the painter Okio, he invents a softer brush to render the subtler beauties of a new world.

Yet though Mr. Hearn's genius is that of a poet, his service to the scientific world is unique. Hundreds of observers have tabulated the sociologic data of barbaric life in both hemispheres. With all our knowledge of classic heroes, what would we not give for the glimpse of a peasant group around a provincial Roman hearth! In Japan we have a life as full as the ancient Roman, and an imagination more sensitive, marvelously preserved for us. Yet this richest mine of human belief and feeling is rapidly filling up with the muddy tides of Western commercialism. Intoxicated by military success, these live pagans must be iconoclasts in their very efforts at reconstruction. Already one can inhale pure Japanese flavor only in the tales of the very old, or in the sequestered life of a hidden village. Mr. Hearn's transfer to the East was timely, for it was at a tragic melting-point of time, and, with phonograph in hand, he has caught the dying strains of an epoch's swan-song.

This figure fairly expresses his method. His chapters are long or short as are his moods. There is little organic unity in them; no scientific aim or philosophic grasp rounds them into form. Even his paragraphs have little cohesion. Speaking of the forming of his sentences, he himself has compared it to the focusing of an image, each added word being like the turn of a delicate screw. He has a microscopic eye. His fancy, like a solar ray passing through a room, gilds a line of motes before unseen. But in this he is not unlike Japan herself. Without analysis, without anxiety, her sweet children love, and sing, and die. Their instinctive loyalties need no prop of universals, nor spur of grim futures. It is enough to live. Their

world is but a flash of local color. So, too, these swift pastels of Mr. Hearn brighten for each tourist his own colder experiences. In entering a new country one faces his facts as they come. It matters little upon which flower he first alights. In these volumes, one cares not at what page he opens. There is little lost in reading a chapter by paragraphs backward, but to push forward rapidly through crowded ranks of facts and impressions is as fatiguing as a day's sightseeing at a fair. Only, be it remembered, his facts are not of matter, but of the spirit.

It will be clear from what has been already said that there is a limitation in Mr. Hearn's vision. Though the veins of pure metal he taps are new and inestimably precious, he makes no claim to exhaust the resources of the soil. It is, in brief, the absence of the faculty which sees the relations of parts to wholes. He cannot attempt to knit together the raveled edges of epochs, nor space his local gems with proportioned intervals. There is no sense of history or of mass. Therefore there are many realities, even highly poetic ones, which our author does not see. Perhaps this lack is conscious abnegation. Perhaps he is content to be himself a Japanese of the common people, whose minds mirror only the passing fact. In this respect he is the true congener of the Ukiyoe painter, that artist from and for the masses, who fills his color prints with the prismatic life of his day. Of this transition era he is the Hokusai and Hiroshige, men whose work, shown him in Japan by Mr. Fenollosa, awakened his sympathy and delight. But the very limitation of the Ukiyoe as a school of Japanese art is its incapacity to understand the national ideals of the past or of the contemporary educated. It is the life of the moment, charming and sweet, but with no outlook. For it the aspiration and splendor of eleven centuries of Japanese art are non-existent. From it are banished the wealthy worlds of court and camp and cloister. It is walled in by caste. It cannot estimate its own phenomena as part of a great thought or scheme. So Mr. Hearn's picture of Japan is of but one half only.

In dealing with religion, or legend, or biographic anecdote, he tells us

only what the native of the present day thinks about it, and not the heart of its significance. This would be parallel to interviewing the peasantry of Italy upon local traditions, or describing the picturesque decay of Rome before its recent restoration. The Florentine boatman of to-day has little conception of the intensely creative life of the fifteenth century; nor do the mouldering ruins of palace and bath, overbuilt by centuries of squalor, transmit an adequate picture of the splendor from which they sprang. It would be the contrast between the consciousness of a devout Catholic in a remote European village, who had never heard of the Renaissance, and that of the educated author who grasps the present as an outcome of that brilliant illumination. Thus, to a student of Oriental faiths, ideals, and creative epochs, Mr. Hearn seems always hovering upon the edge of a discovery. His people's account of Buddhism is like the dew upon maidenhair fern, whose fringes conceal the brink of a deep, exhaustless well. So his occasional penetration to the land of ghosts, as in *A Wish Fulfilled* is without the guidance of a Virgil, or of a priest who could interpret the psychologic law under the apparently fortuitous belief. He is thus in danger of discarding, as the exquisite but vanishing poetry of superstition, a key to the very latest and most important scientific problem.

Yet this reservation must not blind one to the unique beauty and value of Mr. Hearn's work. It is an anthology of lyrics,—lyrics which he and others have actually lived. There is not romantic phase of Greek or mediæval consciousness more charming. He is a contemporary Theocritus; his pictures are as innocent as those of Piero della Francesca. He establishes, even from its popular phrases, the claim of the Oriental world to be civilization's leader in refined sentiment. This is no light task, to stem the skepticism that greeted Japan's irresponsible eulogists. He refers frequently to his learned friend Professor Chamberlain, who, after twenty-five years of study, produced a misleading book, *Things Japanese*, which, as, a storehouse of facts, is the exact antipodes of Mr. Hearn's writings, and of which his favorite pupil said that, were it reprinted in Japanese,

his life could not be guaranteed twelve hours. It is cynical, unfeeling, blind to all the higher meaning of Oriental life and light, sour and self-conscious, like much of English comment on alien standards. If truth is merely what appears to the average analytic, then poetry is a lie, Mr. Hearn is a dreamer, and love and fancy are unimportant human phenomena. Mr. Hearn's appreciation is that of a listener to exquisite music; his expression of it as subtle. He is conscious of the deadness of that brain which dissolves the facts of the soul, and finds a precipitate of utilities. There are foreign scientists who have scoffed at the "Japanese delusion." "And this," the reader may say, — "this is all that you went forth to see: a torii, some shells, a small damask snake, some stones? ... Not of strange sights alone is this charm made, but of numberless subtle sensations and ideas interwoven and interblended: the sweet, sharp scents of grove and sea; the blood-brightening, vivifying touch of the free wind; the dumb appeal of ancient mystic mossy things; vague reverence evoked by knowledge of treading soil called holy for a thousand years; and a sense of sympathy, as a human duty, compelled by the vision of steps of rock worn down into shapelessness by the pilgrim feet of vanished generations." The soul that will not see what the prophet has unveiled is in need of deep pity. And over how many such important truths he lingers, where others have turned away unimpressed! He notices the remarkable beauty and individuality of trees. "Is it that the trees have been so long domesticated and caressed by man ... that they have acquired souls, and strive to show their gratitude, like women loved, by making themselves more beautiful for man's sake?" How rare to find one who describes symbols of the five elements, speaking of a sixth unsymbolized! It is true that he speaks of it as knowledge, where it should have been called self-consciousness. In the chapter on Jizō he writes very tenderly of this beautiful, gracious saviour of the ghosts of children. From the psalm of Jizō he quotes: —<sup>2</sup>

"Be not afraid, dears! be never fearful!  
Poor little souls, your lives were brief indeed!  
. . . . .  
Trust to me! I am your father and mother in the Meido,  
Father of all children in the region of the dead."

And what a touch of poetic pathos in his introduction of the Eurasian girl at the cemetery! "Half-caste, and poor, and pretty, in this foreign port! Better thou wert with the dead about thee, child! better than the splendor of this soft blue light the unknown darkness for thee. There the gentle Jizō would care for thee and hide thee in his great sleeves." He feels an identity, particularly in prayer, with the vanished world of his Greek ancestors: "Blended in some strange way it seems to be with my faint knowledge of an elder world, whose household gods were also the beloved dead; and there is a weird sweetness in this place, like the shadowing of Lares." So his estimate of Japanese art is high, and for the right reason: "One colored print by a Hokusai or Hiroshige, originally sold for less than a cent, may have more real art in it than many a Western painting valued at more than the worth of a whole Japanese street." "The foreign artist will give you realistic reflections of what he sees. . . . The Japanese artist gives you that which he feels, the mood of a season, the precise sensations of an hour and place; his work is qualified by a power of suggestiveness rarely found in the art of the West. . . . He surpasses imagination, excites it, leaves it hungry with the hunger of charm perceived in glimpses only. . . . He is above all things impersonal." Mr. Hearn sees with the intuition of a poet the close relation to Greek art which has heretofore apparently arrested the attention of one or two men only who have brought a critical training to the study. Especially is this to be said of the dances: "Figures lightly poised as birds, —figures that somehow recall the dreams of shapes circling about certain antique vases; those charming Japanese robes, close-clinging about the knees, might seem, but for the great fantastic drooping sleeves, and the



curious broad girdles confining them, designed after the drawing of some Greek or Etruscan artist." "All those feet are small, symmetrical, —light as the feet of figures painted on Greek vases, —and the step is always taken toes first." Though he probably underestimates the influence of Buddhism upon the Japanese soul, yet he knows what a revelation that soul will be to the Western world: "He who would know what Shintō is must learn to know that mysterious soul in which the sense of beauty and the power of art and the fire of heroism and magnetism of loyalty and the emotion of faith, have become inherent, immanent, unconscious, instinctive."

The first volume of *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* deals largely with descriptions of places; the second, more specially with customs and beliefs. The opening essay, *In a Japanese Garden*, will be remembered by readers of *The Atlantic* as one of the most exquisite and characteristic of Mr. Hearn's papers. Here, like the Japanese soul, he comes very close to the heart of nature. He reveals to us the hidden symbols, and the rare intimacies of flower and shrub, rock and tree, waterfall and lake; the many strange forms and cries of insects, the plaint of nightingale and wood-dove, the halo of the lotos-bloom, and the swift movement of frog or fish. Here is scientific observation translated into poetry as delicate as the ferns it describes. In a later chapter he gilds the subject of reincarnation with a touch new to the West: "The young mother who loses her first child may at least pray that it will come back to her out of the night of death. . . . Praying, she writes within the hand of the little corpse the first ideograph of her lost darling's name. Months pass, and she is again a mother. Eagerly she examines the flower-soft hand of the infant, and lo! the selfsame ideograph is there, —a rosy birthmark on the tender palm." In the chapter *The Japanese Smile* lies a very subtle analysis of character; and in the one entitled *Of Souls* we have a first introduction to the marvelous psychology of the East.<sup>2</sup>

Out of the East gives us Mr. Hearn's studies since his change of

residence from Izumo to Kumamoto. The discussion of the story of Alkestis by his students enables him to contrast most strikingly Eastern and Western ideals. Of the *Eternal Feminine* is an elaborate essay, breaking the surface of the philosophy of life, but not altogether satisfactory. It is true that the feminine is not an ideal with Orientals; but the true reason is that they have it as the substance of their life. We who base our civilization upon individuality and struggle need a counterbalance on the side of our aspirations. This essential contrast of East and West Mr. Hearn appears not to perceive. Moreover, women were the social equals of men in earlier Japanese ages; and the category of the feminine is fundamental in Chinese philosophy, where it becomes embodied in certain trees, stones, waters, and other natural objects, as well as in the beautiful Boddhisattiva Kwannon. Mr. Hearn is not at his best as a metaphysician. He flounders somewhat in Buddhist speculation, not always distinguishing between a profound thought and a beautiful legend. But we can forgive him in that he stands forth a stanch champion, defying the West from the heart of the Japanese people. He does this most clearly in his finest essay, *Jiu-jutsu*; here the very meaning of the martial exercise, to "conquer by yielding," is taken as a text to explain the phenomena of national awakening which foreign critics have denounced as a "reversal." Japan has borrowed weapons of force from the West, in order successfully to resist its insidious influence. True progress is from within. Mr. Hearn writes, "However psychologists may theorize on the absence or the limitations of personal individuality among the Japanese, there can be no question at all that, as a nation, Japan possesses an individuality stronger than our own." The late war has demonstrated this truth to the world. We would go further, and say that the very absence of personality is the key to this individuality, and there is every reason to hope that this race, still so young and vigorous, may solve the world-problem of uniting the civilizations of two hemispheres.

- 1) *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*. By LAFCADIO HEARN. In two volumes. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. 1894.

80 "Yugiri O Kyaku San (The Guest who leaves with the Twilight)": The Fenollosas and Lafcadio Hearn

*Out of the East: Reveries and Studies in New Japan.* By LAFCADIO HEARN. Same publishers. 1895.

- 2) For the enclosed parts, the manuscript exists in fragments at the Houghton Library, Harvard University; See Murakata ed. *The Ernest F. Fenollosa Papers*, III(Literature) (Tokyo: Museum Press, 1987), pp. 104-5.

## APPENDIX II.

Lafcadio Hearn's Review of Percival Lowell, *Occult Japan* (1895)

—from *The Atlantic Monthly* (June, 1895)

To modern sociology the discovery of any primitive polytheism not including some belief in supernatural possession would prove a startling event; and to find such belief non-existent in the ancient religion of Japan would be more astonishing than to find it, as Mr. Lowell does, exceptionally present. What seems more remarkable is that so many other writers should have failed to look for those facts and forms of spiritualism which the author of *Occult Japan*<sup>1</sup> has been investigating. Previously, it was known in a vague way that the religion of Shintō—according to which all the dead become *Kami* (superiors), or spiritual powers—had its oracles and its priests or priestesses who were subject to divine possession. But the extent and variety of the ghostly beliefs and practices of Shintō had not even been guessed. It was left for Mr. Lowell first to expound such a singular article of common faith as that even the humblest peasant may cause himself to become possessed by a god, and so obtain powers of thaumaturgy, of healing, and of prophecy. It was also reserved for Mr. Lowell to suggest not merely the intimacy of the relation between the living and the dead in Shintō, but also the strange depth to which the primitive belief reaches down into the roots of the national existence, —matters both of sociological interest. Like *The Soul of the Far East*, his *Occult Japan* is in the nature of a revelation. Nevertheless, to do the author full justice, it is necessary to remind the reader that *Occult Japan* treats of but one aspect of a multiform and unfamiliar subject, and also that this aspect of Shintō is in all respects the least inviting.

So far from being by nature materialistic and skeptical, as formerly represented, the Japanese would seem, of all civilized races, the most profoundly influenced by faith in the supernatural. For them, all the

woods and peaks, all the lakes and streams, of their native land are divinely haunted; and all the occupations of men, all human actions, all functions of life, are ruled by special deities, patron or tutelar. Each hamlet has its local deities, each family its own cult, each home its Lares and Penates. But the religious condition does not offer a real parallel with that of the old Greek world. There are differences multitudinous and complex; and the suggested attempt at a parallel would perhaps be found most at fault in relation to those rites and beliefs with which Mr. Lowell's book chiefly deals. They would appear to have survived with little modification from an epoch in human evolution far antedating that represented by our own classical antiquity. On the subject of supernatural possession, especially, it is probable that the Japanese beliefs would be found to have an archaic character differing greatly from what we know of Greek ideas on the same topic. Mr. Lowell justly expresses his astonishment at the great variety of the beliefs in spirit-possession which he discovered; and this very multiformity would indicate their primitive character. Yet they are in all likelihood much more numerous and varied than they appeared even to him. "There is intentional possession," he says, "and unintentional possession; possession by mediation of the church, and possession immediate by the devil; beneficent possession by dead men, and malevolent possession by live beasts. There is, in short, possession by pretty nearly every kind of creature — *except by other living men.*" Here Mr. Lowell is in error. Possession by the living, so far from being unknown to Japanese imagination, is perhaps one of the most common forms of the belief, as also one of the most ghastly. Moreover, this particular sort of possession is divided and subdivided into a number of varieties. There is conscious malevolent possession by the living (but this costs, eventually, the life of the hater as well as of the hated), there is unconscious malevolent possession, and there is possession of the living by the living through priestly mediation. What the Japanese term "living ghosts" play a part of no small interest in romance and drama; and the belief is common enough to have a

technology of its own. But it would require the labors of a generation of folk-lorists to exhaust the enormous subject of Japanese popular beliefs.

The occult element in Shintō, as Mr. Lowell shows, certainly existed long before the time of the first Buddhist missions; and it would be interesting to learn, though almost impossible to define, how far the two religions subsequently acted and reacted upon each other. On this subject we can obtain some general facts from various sources, but only sufficient to indicate in a rather vague way the history and character of the interrelation. We know that the Aryan faith attempted to adopt Shintō bodily into its vast system, declaring the chief Shintō gods to be Buddhist avatars, and accepting ancestor-worship of necessity. But to absorb the countless myriads of the Kami proved a task exceeding even the prodigious assimilative powers of Buddhism. Shintō could not be absorbed, neither could it be cast out. The introduction of the Confucian and Taoist teachings only gave it fresh strength. To consider the nature of the opposition it could offer to absorption, one should know something of its exclusively national character, its conservative horror of contact with things alien, its early dislike of images, and its archaic deuteronomy regarding pollution and purification. One should remember, also, not only its millions of primeval gods, the countless special Kami of towns and villages, the spirits of mountain and shore, and the innumerable souls of ancestors apotheosized, but likewise that in every Japanese home each household utensil — rice-pot, brazier, ladle — has its guardian invisible. Even to-day, in the heart of the country, each chamber of a dwelling has its divine tenant, and every action of family life is, under rules of time, place, or direction, enforced by spiritual discipline. Buddhism, indeed, became the educator of Japan. It taught a faith, a philosophy, and various codes of Chinese ethics in harmony with national sentiment; it introduced an immense variety of arts; it opened myriads of schools; it built imposing temples, and beautified them with all that could appeal to the imagination; it placed holy images by every wayside, and sculptured the rocks with

Sanskrit texts; its drums and its mighty bells measured time for all the dwellers of cities. The people learned to love it, because it was beautiful and very wise. But that other faith, viewless and artless, whose gods are ghosts, whose shrines are void and silent, whose only moral code is the heart of man, remained through all the centuries the dominator of the national life, and even of Buddhism itself. The Buddhist priest might find himself called upon not only to cast out malevolent Shintō spirits, but to submit himself to possession by harmless ones, or, in other words, to call up the dead to speak through his lips. (It is rather to be regretted that Mr. Lowell has not noticed certain touching forms of this invocation, a rite still secretly practiced notwithstanding government prohibition.) But in spite of apparent mutual yielding, the two religions never really ceased to remain separate. They did seem to blend temporarily in Ryōbu-Shintō, as Mr. Lowell points out, but Ryōbu-Shintō is an acknowledged failure. Otherwise they became friends in a general way without joining hands, though we must notice the overt hostility to Shintō of the later Buddhist sects, the Nichiren and Shinshū. Both, however, have been compelled to yield much in practice, if not in theory, —the Nichirenites especially to the power of the Izumo-Taisha, and the Shinshū to that great Shintō sect whose chief temples are at Ise. The Shintōist does not desire to reject Buddhism, but he will not abandon the more ancient gods of his fathers, and thus obliges Buddhism to compromise. Side by side, yet separately, the two religions live in millions of homes; each having its special shrine and tablets, each its special rites performed at particular hours, each a totally distinct cult of ancestral spirits. And the opposition to blending is essentially Shintō. No Shintō priest will knowingly play a Buddhist rôle, but Buddhist priests of certain sects will perform Shintō rites of necromancy, as Mr. Lowell bears witness. Probably at no time in Japanese history did Shintō ever yield to Buddhism as Buddhism has yielded to Shintō; and to-day, after a thousand years of Buddhist teaching, the empire and all its life are still practically ruled by the dead.

That the veritable religion of Japan should have remained practically unknown to the Occident until within the present generation is a fact of great significance. Foreign observers studied the texts, but failed to perceive the power, because that power was viewless, and because the outward tokens of Shintō intimated only emptiness. Yet it was really this weird vacuity which should have suggested the truth. To Mr. Lowell it partly did so. "The simple beauty of the Shintō faith," he tells us, "is, in an emotional sense, the very essence of what makes Far-Eastern life so fine. Mere outline of a faith as Shintō at first sight seems to be, on closer study it proves to be something little less than grand in its very simplicity. Truly it needs no formal priesthood, no elaborate service, no costly shrines; for it has as visibly about it something better than all these, its very gods. To Shintō they are always there; and the great cryptomeria groves no longer seem untenanted, the plain, bare buildings no longer lack a host; for at any instant they may be pervaded by a presence, —the presence of the incarnate spirit of the god." Behind the irony there is glimpse of a fact too large for irony. Indeed, the majesty of Shintō is in its very ghostliness; but for that reason it remains hidden from the unsympathetic observer, and to some extent, one must believe, even from Mr. Lowell himself. Little the passing traveler imagines that Tōkyō, with its half-Europeanized society, its dress balls, its military parade, is governed by the dead. To him the great army festivals seem mere holidays of diversion: he cannot guess that the horse-races and the fireworks and all the pageantry are for invisible guests,—the soldier dead of all the centuries. Still for the mass of the people all human action is influenced by the unseen. Still are the heroes of the past invoked with pomp official in the hour of national peril. Still the Emperor speaks to the august spirits of his fathers, and with prayer and offerings petitions their protection for his fleets and armies. Nay, the commonest sights of a street—a paper pasted above a door, a flower display, a dance of children, a chant of begging pilgrims — have ghostly meanings unguessed by the stranger, but of deepest import in the life of the race. And when we know



that the whole vast power of this spiritual feeling can be used as one directing force for a national end, that it not only has been, but even now is so being used, the subject of Shintō certainly expands beyond the range of jesting.

But how are we to reconcile the fact of this colossal spiritualism with the common assertion of unquestionable authorities that the Japanese are indifferent to those philosophical and metaphysical problems which fill so large a place in Western intellectual life? The student of comparative psychology will answer that what has been termed indifference to such questions is probably incapacity for them; and that the race has not yet reached that point of intellectual maturity at which the ability to form and to combine general ideas becomes a pleasure rather than a pain. Such an explanation finds support in the comparative absence of words in Japanese to express abstract ideas, and even in the very structure of the language, as Professor Chamberlain has shown (the metaphysical terms of Buddhism being, of course, Sanskrit or Chinese). And this surmise naturally tempts to another,—that the peculiar charm of Japanese life may be the charm of childishness. Certainly the psychological chapters of Mr. Lowell's book would indicate the affirmative, though he refuses, this time, frankly to acknowledge the charm. Those gracious approaches to sympathy, delicate as unspoken regret for a lost friend, and that playful tenderness of criticism, which made the delight of *Noto* and of *The Soul of the Far East*, are sadly absent from this least pleasant but not least instructive of his book. The special phenomena of which he made so elaborate a study were not in themselves attractive, but merely curious, and sometimes, perhaps, superficially ludicrous. He was dealing with just that phase of the subject most likely to repel a cultivated observer, the theatrical side, with its mummeries and mimings, its hysteria and hypnotism. But one is tempted to ask whether the author of *Occult Japan* has not shown himself supersensitive to the repulsive side of the lower forms of Shintō. It may also strike the reader that the mental weaknesses of a gifted and amiable

race are not kindly treated in this rather satirical volume. That Mr. Lowell touches profound truths very keenly at times, in its pages, is beyond all question. But there are two facts to remember when dealing with questions of race difference. The first is that differences in psychology are only differences of degree, not of kind, and that all stages of intellectual arrest or immaturity may be found among any race; the second is that a nation may owe, in emergencies, more to its weakness than to its strength, since the degree of its mental evolution must be invariably proportioned in fitness to social conditions. Now, Mr. Lowell does not sufficiently imply that the deficiencies he criticises are altogether relative. But their relativity offers the most interesting subject of consideration; for it is probably just by virtue of those very deficiencies that Japan remains capable of uniting all the energies of her forty millions into one prodigious effort to any desired end. That feebleness of emotional volume which Mr. Lowell terms want of personality, that comparative approach to mental uniformity which he calls lack of individuality, that susceptibility to influence which he satirizes as hypnotic, are psychological conditions inevitable to any race with an evolutionary history like that of Japan; and they have been a source of national gain instead of loss. It is very doubtful if the government could have wrought those miracles which have redeemed Japan from alien domination, had it not been for the extremely plastic nature of the humanity under control. Forty millions of subjects united in one faith of loyalty, filial piety, and obedience—forty millions of Shintōists, in short—represent a living material whose very homogeneity renders any political miracle possible, a mental world throughout equally sensitive to every directing impulse. No faith that preserves a nation's independence, and prepares it for larger and loftier things, can be all unworthy of our admiration.

- 1) *Occult Japan; or, The Way of the Gods.* By PERCIVAL LOWELL. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. 1895.

## Appendix III.

## A Letter from Lafcadio Hearn to Edward S. Morse

Tokyo

Nov. 25th/'96

Dear Mr. Morse: —

Your most kind letter of Sept. 21st has been lying before me for nearly two months unanswered. This was not because I did not fully appreciate the compliment of such a letter from the author of far the best book on a special Japanese subject ever written, or probably ever to be written, but because I wished in acknowledging it to speak also of the address mentioned therein as having been mailed to me. It has evidently been lost—probably because of my change of address. I left Kobe for Tokyo in August, to fill a chair in the University which you know so well, as a former Professor.

I have received many kind letters about my attempts to reflect the beautiful and the true in Japanese life as they appear to me, but none that gave me such pleasure as yours, nor any emanating from one equally fitted to criticize a book on Japan. My very best thanks to you, and kindest regards—

L. Hearn (Y. Koizumi)

Edward S. Morse, Esq.

By courtesy of the Peabody Museum, Salem, Mass.